(b) whether it is a fact that Government propose to sell forty aircraft to replace the ageing fleet of Indian Airlines and Air India; and

(c) if so, the amount of expenditure involved in replacement of aircrafts and in what manner Government propose to finance the purchase of new aircrafts especially when Air India and Indian Airlines are financially not so strong?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Staff average in AI

3814. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether overstaffing has been one of Air India's problem areas and the Airline has over 700 people to serve each of its 24 aircraft as compared to the industry average of 300 persons per aircraft;

(b) whether the cost of Air India staff in 1997-98 at Rs. 832 crore was 20 per cent of its gross expenses;

(c) if so, what is the percentage of staff cost to gross expenses for the year 1999-2000; and

(d) what steps Government are taking to reduce the staff strength of Air India so as to bring it at par with the industry average?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir;

(b) and (c) The staff cost excluding crew cost in Air India was 18.42% of gross expenses in 1997-98 and is expected to be 20.9% in 1999-2000.

(d) Air India has taken following steps for rationalising man power :—

(i) Freeze on external recruitment in non-operational categories;

(ii) Several posts of India based officers abroad have been abolished;

(iii) Rolling back of retirement age from 60 to 58 years;

(iv) Redeployment of employees from non-operational to operational areas;

(v) Two voluntary schemes have been notified viz. shorter working week scheme and leave without pay/allowances scheme for a period of two years extendable upto five years;

(vi) A voluntary retirement scheme has recently been approved by the Board.

Scam in Airports Authority of India

†3815. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large scale scam involving crores of rupees has been busted in the Airports Authority of India recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of officials and employees found guilty in the said scam; and

(d) the details of action taken to check the recurrence of such scams?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV) : (a) No such case has come to the notice of the Government recently.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Construction of Private Airports in Madhya Pradesh

3816. SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have received proposals for construction of private airports and hangers in Bhopal and Indore in Madhya Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof with the names of firms; and

(c) whether Government have also received proposals for setting up of Pilot Training Centre/Institute in Madhya Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV) : (a) No, Sir.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.